

People's History Museum, Manchester, UK

In 2010, Ruukki supplied Liberta™ Cor-Ten® 600 to the external façade of the landmark People's History Museum in Manchester.



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The museum displays a selection of galleries, covering over 200 years of history, from the Peterloo Massacre of 1819 through to the present day. This national museum of democracy displays not only the history of working people but also offers a breath of learning opportunities and events.

The site's existing structure was known as the Pump House, and opened over two decades ago. In more recent times, plans were made to develop the building further, with an expansion that would bring all the museum's collections together under one roof.

In 2010, this vision was realised after the site received a £12.5 million investment from local, regional and national partners. A multi-story extension was built, and attached to the restored pump house by a stylish glass walkway. The architect, Austin-Smith:Lord, selected Ruukki Liberta™ Cor-Ten® 600 to clad the external façade.

For this project, a solution was needed to bring the old and new buildings together architecturally. The site has a prominent riverside location, and needed to present an eye-catching exterior to attract visitors and allow the museum to stand out from the surrounding buildings.

Using Liberta™ Cor-Ten® 600 allowed the architect to design a new building that is modern and elegant, yet compatible in tone with the ageing pump house. This enabled the new extension to have a bold presence without completely overshadowing the historic site.

As the building begins to age, the exterior material will change due to natural environmental impact on the surface of the material. This is one of the reasons why the Ruukki Liberta™ Cor-Ten® 600 material is complementary to older buildings, especially brickwork.

The People's History Museum was the first public building in the UK to be built with an extraordinary Corten metal shell. The building went on to win the Greater Manchester Chamber Building of the Year award in 2010.

Photos Austin-Smith:Lord





